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CLEAR Method Cards

A Design Toolkit to aid local authorities in place branding
Eric Thompson 2014

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CONTENTS

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|----|----------------------|-----|
| 1.0 ABSTRACT | 05 | 8.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY | 97 |
| 2.0 INTRODUCTION | 07 | 8.1 Websites | 107 |
| 3.0 BRANDING | 13 | 8.2 Image references | 111 |
| 3.1 Place Branding | 17 | 9.0 APPENDICES | 119 |
| 3.2 Co-creation | 23 | | |
| 4.0 PREVIOUS PLACE BRANDING WORK | 25 | | |
| 4.1 Helensville | 27 | | |
| 4.2 Matakana Coast & Country | 29 | | |
| 4.3 Wellsford | 31 | | |
| 5.0 EXISTING PROCESSES | 37 | | |
| 5.1 Method Card Research | 41 | | |
| 6.0 METHOD CARD TOOLKIT | 51 | | |
| 6.1 Method Card Development | 53 | | |
| 6.2 Method Card Construction | 57 | | |
| 6.2.1 Physical card | 59 | | |
| 6.3 Mock-ups | 61 | | |
| 6.3.1 Ideation | 63 | | |
| 6.4 Final Card | 65 | | |
| 6.4.1 Layout | 67 | | |
| 6.4.2 Typeface | 69 | | |
| 6.4.3 Colour | 71 | | |
| 6.5 Final Design | 73 | | |
| 6.6 Role Cards | 75 | | |
| 6.7 Reflection | 77 | | |
| 6.8 Posters | 79 | | |
| 6.9 CLEAR Method Cards | 91 | | |
| 7.0 CONCLUSION | 93 | | |

1.0 ABSTRACT

This design research investigates the development of a co-creative public/community design process facilitated by a bespoke toolkit. The toolkit design is informed by existing method cards and toolkit designs used by large international agencies such as IDEO and Frog Design.

The need for the toolkit was prompted by my experience working on the place branding of Helensville, Matakana Coast & Country and Wellsford. I realised the place brand redesign was not well articulated because there was no early engagement with the local New Zealand community. This research project aimed to design a process that was affordable, flexible, inclusive and replicable, as well as one that provoked discussion around the social and economic impact of place branding in order to respond to the diverse nature of local communities.

After reflecting on the positives and negatives gained from the three local place brands I have been involved with, and considering my research into existing method cards and toolkits, I have designed a series of cards and posters. The proposed toolkit enables the local authority to first focus on the place brand challenge, and then engage with the wider community via a community event, which occurs at an early stage in the design process. This toolkit encourages the local community to be actively involved in the process.

This design-led Master of Design project has progressed using research methods associated with participatory design, co-creation and ethnographic fieldwork. The three methods are similar in that, “There is a recognition that people such as end users hold expertise about their needs and dreams and that their contributions are essential for finding and implementing solutions to problems” (Sanders and Stappers, 2012, p. 30).